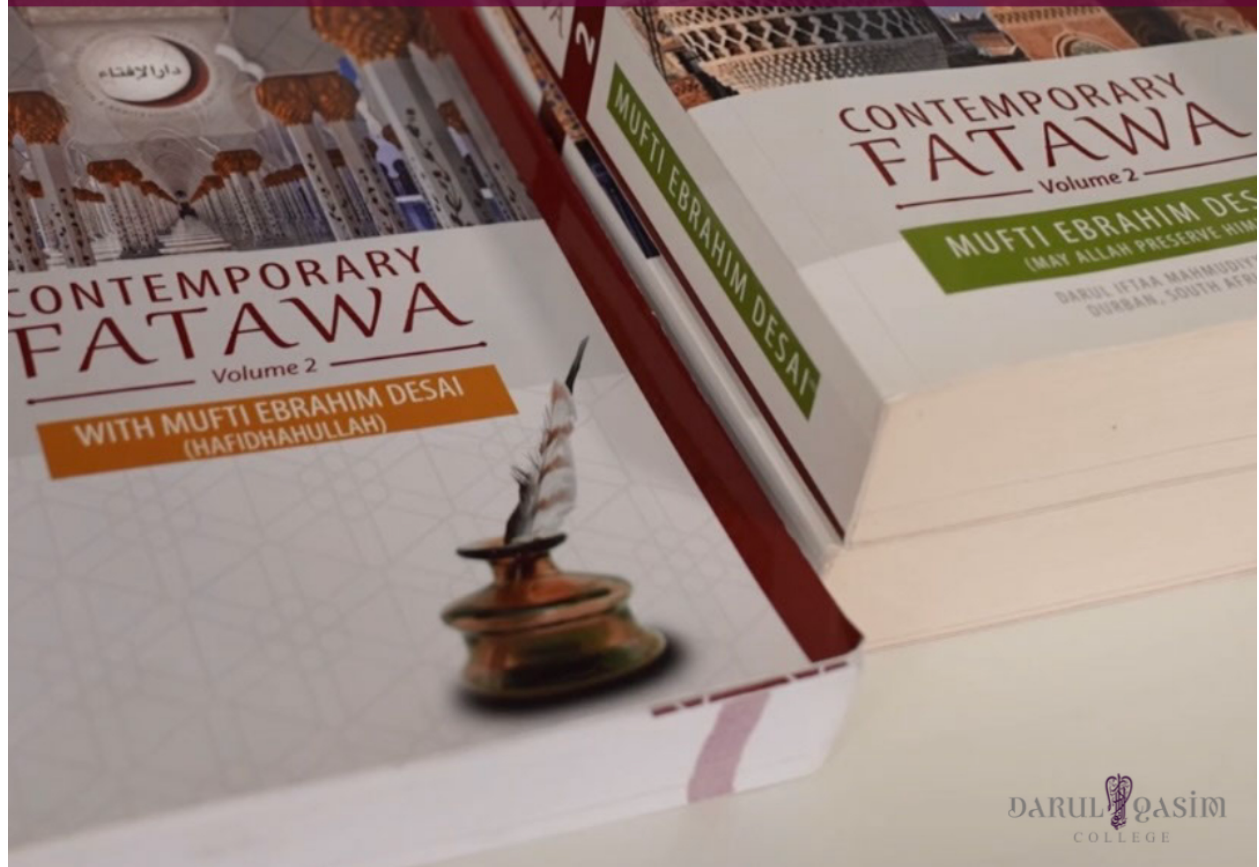


THE LIFE OF A FATWĀ

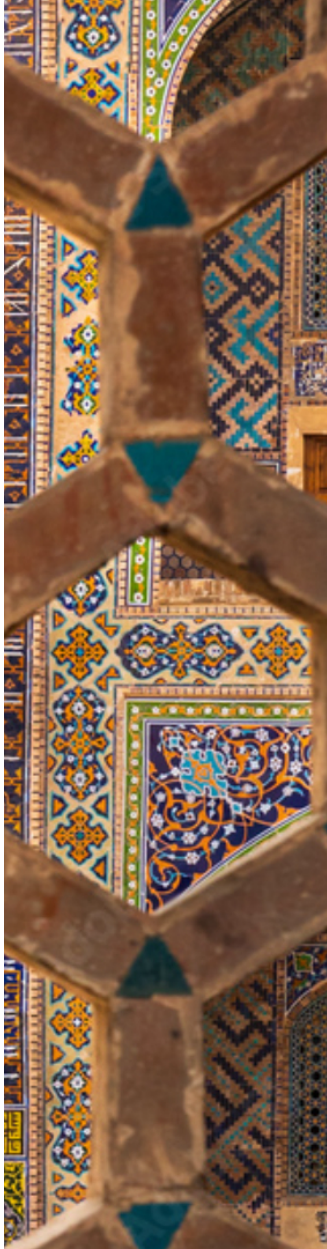
WITH ISLAMIC LAW
DEPARTMENT CHAIR

MUFTI HISHAM
DAWOOD



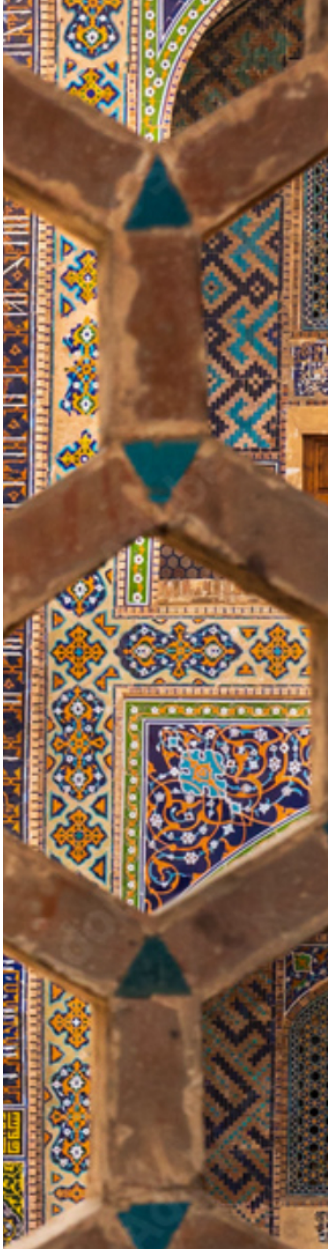
“The focus that we as a department have is what we call building aptitude. Which means the student isn’t only spoon fed something, but they’re also taught how to come to conclusions by themselves.”





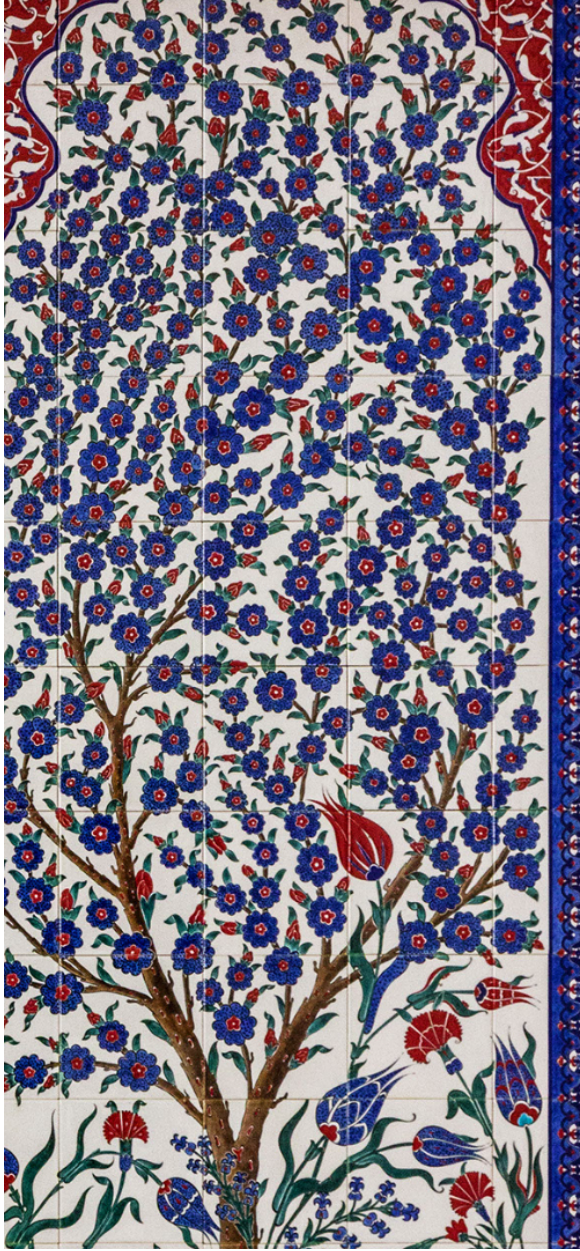
“Fiqh in its meaning, means understanding or a very deep understanding. If you have fiqh, you have a very deep understanding of these issues and of these chapters that you are studying.”

“The idea is that you’re able to answer any question that comes up, I mean you have the aptitude to do it. It requires a certain amount of research, collaboration, and corroboration with others in their fields.”



"Yet, what is important and this is the objective of our department is that we are able to produce these trainees, these students who have the fiqh."

The Iftā program is open to both men and women who qualify for enrollment. The department has sought out potential prospects from the existing student body, both male and female. Mufti Hisham emphasizes the importance of taking into consideration how much a student can consume.



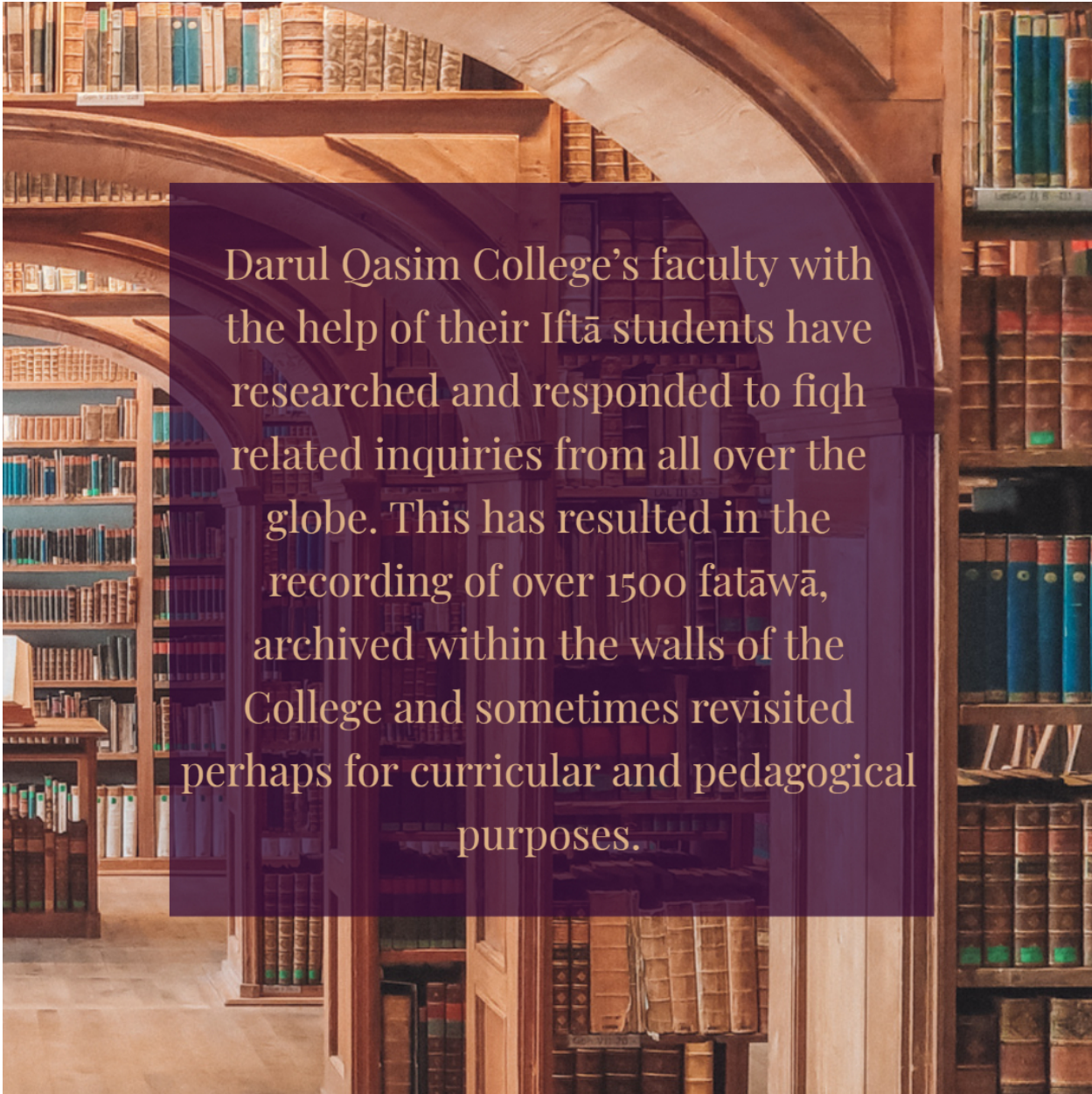
“One term that is used often in Islamic Studies is ‘Ālim Al-Murabbī or Ustadh Al-Murabbī. They use this word murabbī, it comes from tarbiya. Part of tarbiya, nurturing, is that you know each student at his or her level. They’re given that much knowledge and that much information is passed on to them.”

“And slowly, their bank of knowledge or if you want to call it their bank of ‘ilm is slowly populated. Until they become this mature tree of knowledge. They are then able to eat from those fruits and pass it on to others as well.”



The training to become a muftī or muftiya exemplifies Darul Qasim College's approach to training students in a way that is relevant to the here and now. In these classroom spaces, tradition is brought to life and takes on a fluid nature—permeating the responses to questions sent from individuals living in the United States and around the globe.





Darul Qasim College's faculty with the help of their Iftā students have researched and responded to fiqh related inquiries from all over the globe. This has resulted in the recording of over 1500 fatawā, archived within the walls of the College and sometimes revisited perhaps for curricular and pedagogical purposes.

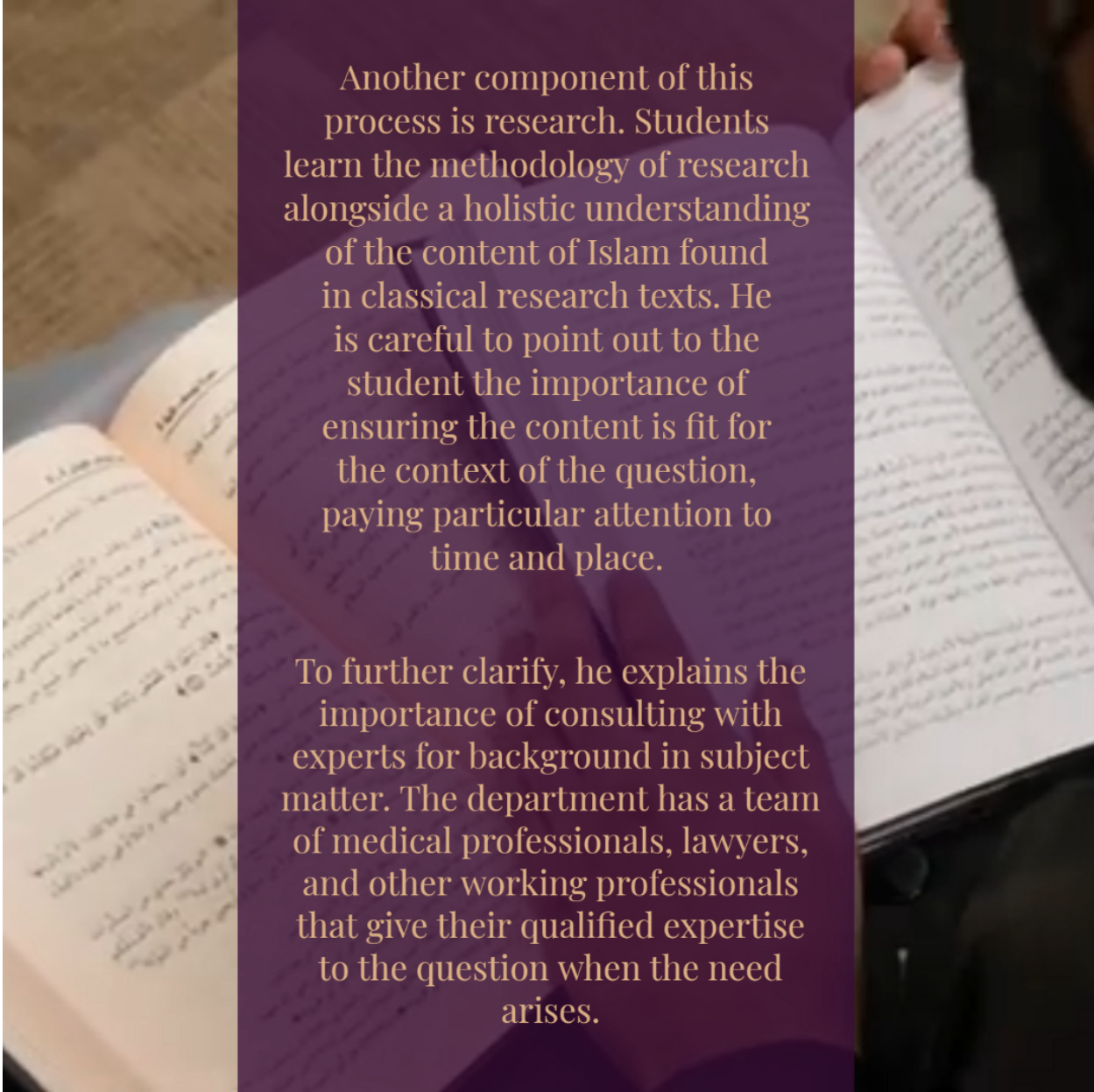


Per year, each trainee is required to answer 100 of these questions received via the college's website. Additionally, they are required to complete two research papers, a short essay every semester, and a two year course.

“So at the end of the Iftā course, each trainee answers approximately 200 questions. What we call daily questions.”

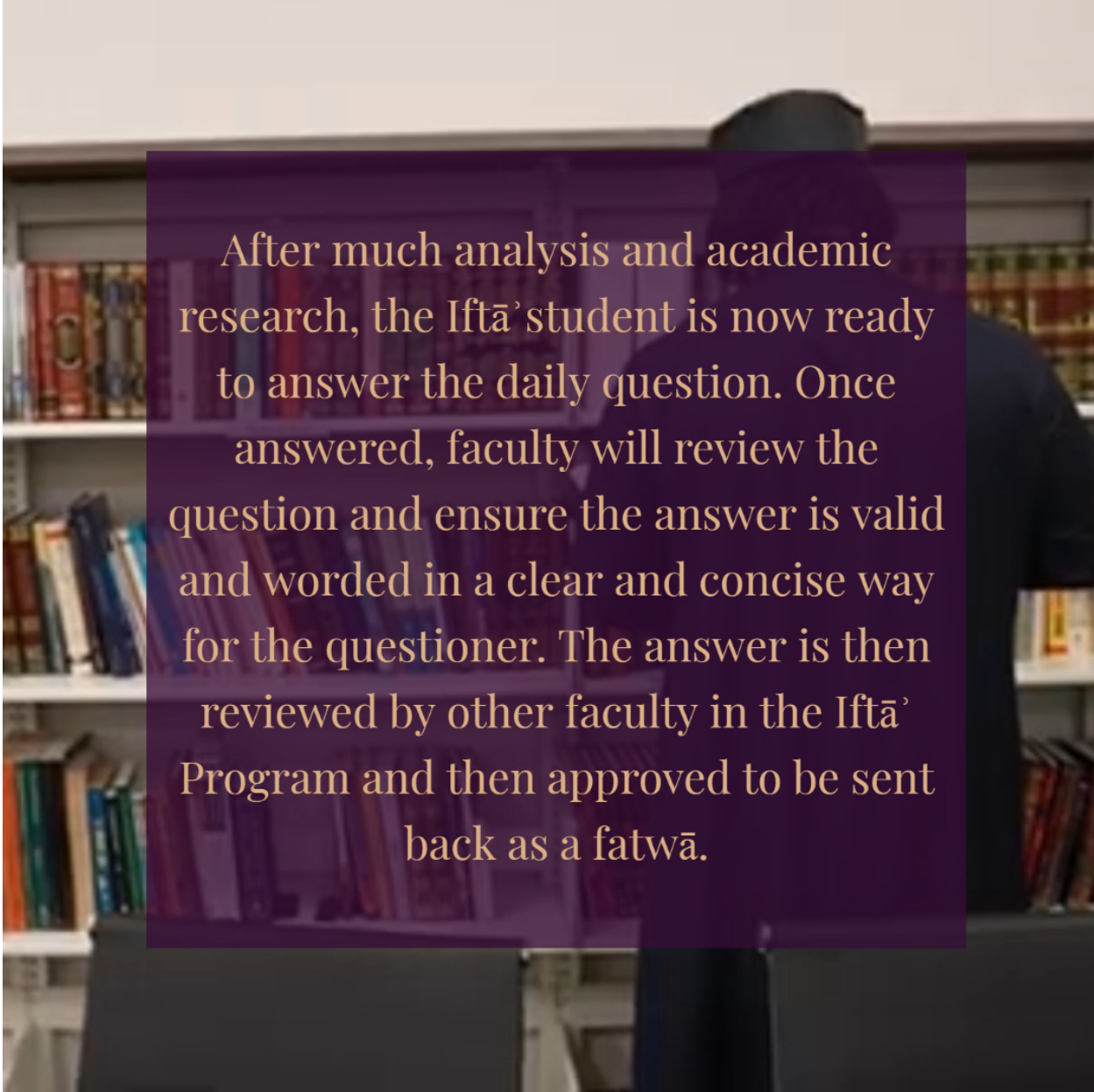
We enter the classroom of Mufti Hisham as he works with an Iftā student on one of the daily questions. Fresh off the internet, the question reveals many layers. Mufti Hisham reminds the student of a key component: the legal analysis of the question. He gently nudges,

“the answer is based upon the analysis of the question.” He urges them to spend time with the question in order to understand it—“What is the question actually asking? Who is asking (gender, age, country, etc.)?”



Another component of this process is research. Students learn the methodology of research alongside a holistic understanding of the content of Islam found in classical research texts. He is careful to point out to the student the importance of ensuring the content is fit for the context of the question, paying particular attention to time and place.

To further clarify, he explains the importance of consulting with experts for background in subject matter. The department has a team of medical professionals, lawyers, and other working professionals that give their qualified expertise to the question when the need arises.

A person is seen from behind, standing in a library or study area with bookshelves filled with books. A semi-transparent purple rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing text in a gold-colored serif font.

After much analysis and academic research, the Iftā' student is now ready to answer the daily question. Once answered, faculty will review the question and ensure the answer is valid and worded in a clear and concise way for the questioner. The answer is then reviewed by other faculty in the Iftā' Program and then approved to be sent back as a fatwā.

The “life of a fatwā” offers a glimpse into the intellectual aptitude that is being nurtured and honed by faculty like Mufti Hisham in the department of Islamic Law. The days and weeks that go into what appears to be a straightforward question reveals the academic integrity and rigor that is at the heart of the college’s curricular and pedagogical approach.

